A full-length photograph of Oral Roberts, an older man with glasses, smiling. He is wearing a dark double-breasted suit, a white shirt, and a red tie with a pattern. He is standing in front of a wooden bookshelf. The bookshelf has several books, a brass trophy on a shelf, and a potted plant on the left. The background wall is green with a pattern of small white hearts. The floor is red.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

by Oral Roberts

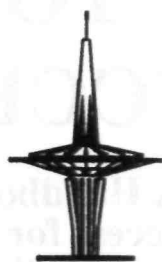
Now you can have the same keys
to success that Oral Roberts
has used in more than 50 years
of successful ministry!

KEYS TO SUCCESS

**A Handbook
to Success for People
in Every Walk of Life**

by Oral Roberts

*Unless otherwise indicated,
all Scripture quotations are from the
King James Version of the Bible.*



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INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 16:19 Jesus said, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom.*

Keys. I carry various keys on my car key ring and another two or three in my wallet. I know, as Jesus indicated, that we need keys not only to enter His kingdom but also for places we wish to enter in the natural realm. Having keys to unlock things vital to us is so important.

But not having a key you need is another story. Have you ever had that experience? I have, and it's a frustrating one and often even defeating, keeping me from getting into something important to my life. So I pay attention to keys.

In my over fifty years of ministry, I have learned that there are certain keys to success in life—keys which have been the secret to the success God has given me. I've also learned that it is up to you whether or not you succeed in life. **It's up to you how badly you want success** and whether you use proven keys to unlock doors to the success God has for your life.

The story is told of a young man who greatly admired a successful man in town, and he sought opportunity to ask him the secret of his success. One day he found him fishing at the river just outside town. Standing there, he watched the man for an hour or two, trying to get up the courage to approach him. Finally he

walked up and blurted out, "Sir, how do I get to be successful like you?"

The man stood up, grabbed the young man, jumped into the river with him, and pushed him under. Each time his head would come up, the man would push it down again. When he saw that the young man was about to drown, he pulled him out of the water and laid him on the shore.

The young man lay there, trying to get his breath. Finally, when he could breathe normally again, he gasped, "Sir, why did you do that to me?"

"Son," the man said, "do you remember how badly you wanted to get your breath as I kept pushing you under the water?"

"Oh, yes, I do!"

"When you want success as badly as you. wanted your breath, you'll get it," the man said.

I thought of that story when I sat down and let the Holy Spirit bring up to me the keys that have been all important to the degree of success I've had in my life and ministry. I was amazed when, scarcely realizing it, I had written down twenty-one keys. I have prayed over each key and each individual page I've written, believing that this book will bless you in a special way.

Friend, I pray that you'll use the proven keys I share in this book to unlock doors to the success God has planned for your life. Remember, success is yours; achieving it is up to you and how badly you want it.

KEY ONE

HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT IT?

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

—I Corinthians 9:24

I've never met a successful person behind whom there was not struggle after struggle. As one such person said to me, "It just *looks* easy."

What success I've had has consumed my very life. It has taken faith, yes; but work, work, work, is a big ingredient. And struggle—I can't begin to describe it!—is a daily diet. I've never been able to get away from struggle.

One day in one of my healing crusades I was grumbling about this. Bob DeWeese, my associate evangelist and close friend, told me a little story. He said, "A woman I knew was always bemoaning her struggles. Different ones were trying to help her, but she wouldn't have any of it. Finally she said, 'John 16:33 says, *In the world ye shall have tribulation*. And I'm going to *tribulate!*'"

I said, "I get the point, Bob."

Bob was one of the most "up" men of God I've ever known. Often he bore the brunt of setting up my largest crusades in cities where some ministers were doing

everything in their power to prevent my coming. Some of them went to the news editors of local newspapers and had editorials written against the crusade. Others had influence with the city council and got them to deny us a permit to set up the big tent.

But somehow we always got the permit. The tent was erected, the lost and sick thronged it, and thousands came to know that Jesus not only saves today but He also still heals today. Bob never complained to me about these struggles. He always said, "Oral, you be there to preach and pray, and your team will do the rest." And they did.

Lee Braxton, a successful North Carolina businessman and civic leader who joined me as a dollar-a-year man and served with me for thirty years until his homegoing, told me, "Oral, I want to share with you what I've learned in building twenty-two corporations and being mayor of my city: **People in need cannot identify with somebody who has had it easy.**

"There is a positive force coming out of a person who faces struggles and never gives up, who doesn't carry around a long face or look like an accident about to happen. I've learned that nothing and nobody can get me down or keep me down if I want to succeed badly enough."

Then Lee gave me a compliment, the kind which really means something. He said, "Oral, you have as strong a determination to obey God as any man I've ever known, no matter what the cost to yourself. And that is why people come to hear you preach the Gospel and pray for their healing. When the crusade is over, people look

How Badly Do You Want It?

back and say, 'Oral Roberts wanted to obey God badly enough that he did it.' That's what they remember the most."

Lee's words reminded me:

Every woman has to travail to give birth to a baby.

Every car has to go forward to cover the miles.

Every plane has to climb against the winds to get to the best altitude for flying.

Every parent has to work to keep the family together.

Every miracle harvest has to begin with a seed sown first.

For such things to happen, to achieve true success, one has to want it badly enough!

KEY TWO

ALWAYS BE IN COVENANT WITH GOD'S VISION FOR YOUR LIFE

Not my will, but thine, be done.

—Luke 22:42

Recently a pastor of a large charismatic church said to me, "Oral, I've always appreciated that you are in covenant with God's vision for your life."

At first, I was struck by the thought, *How did he know this?* Then my mind raced back over the years to the fateful hour when I gave up my own personal vision and came into covenant, or agreement, with God's vision which He had been trying to awaken in me as a young man.

It had never occurred to me that the vision I had for myself was not the one I was supposed to have. I either didn't know or refused to be open to the reality that God had actually chosen a vision for me that would make me the man I was born to be.

I was born to a father who was a preacher and a mother who was a woman of strong healing faith. I was the last of five children.

Once when Mama was going to pray for a neighbor's child who was dying with pneumonia, she made a vow to the Lord, promising she would dedicate the baby she

carried in her womb to His calling to preach the Gospel. She had asked God for a blue-eyed, black-haired baby boy. "If You will heal this child I'm going to pray for tonight, I'll give You mine when he is born," she told God that fateful night.

God did heal that little neighbor boy, and when I was born, Mama took me to church and had three ministers lay hands on me and dedicate me to Him.

It was years before I knew this. I grew up with a different dream. My Grandfather Roberts was a frontier judge in Oklahoma—then Indian Territory—and I loved and admired him so much that it made me want to be a lawyer when I grew up. Over time this vision took hold of my whole being. I became so consumed with it that when I learned of Mama's vow to God for my life, I rejected it and left home with my own plans, never expecting to return.

I learned a great lesson a few months later. While playing in a district basketball play-off, I collapsed to the floor, bleeding and unconscious, while making a driving lay-up with the ball. My coach picked me up and took me back home to my parents.

The generational curse of tuberculosis, which was on my Indian mother's side of the family, had struck me down. When the doctors told me I had tuberculosis in the last stages, my own vision went out the window. **Then my only vision was to live and not die.** But it was during those five months when I was bedfast, hemorrhaging to death, that God had a chance to get my attention.

When no medication could help me and Papa had

signed the papers for me to be admitted into a tuberculosis sanitarium, God sent my sister Jewel to me. She said, "Oral, God is going to heal you." A thrill went through me.

A few nights later Papa knelt at the end of my bed and announced that he was going to pray until I gave my heart to God. As he kept praying, I suddenly raised my head from my pillow, looked into his face, and in the place of his countenance saw a vision of Jesus. It broke me up, and I began to pray. Soon I had received Jesus as my personal Savior. And that's when things began to change for Oral Roberts!

Elmer, my older brother, came and carried me on my little mattress and put me in the backseat of his car. My parents rode in the front with him. I heard him say, "There's an evangelist praying for the sick in Ada. I'm taking Oral there to get healed!"

Lying there in the backseat, the Lord spoke these words to me: "Son, I am going to heal you, and you are to take My healing power to your generation. You are to build Me a university. Build it on My authority and on the Holy Spirit."

There it was: God's vision for me. It was not my own any longer. I made a covenant, a commitment to God's vision for my life, as we drove toward the tent meeting. By the time we arrived, I knew that I knew I would be healed and that someday I would take God's healing power to my generation and I would build Him a university. Without knowing about making a covenant with God and His vision, that's exactly what I did.

The pastor who years later said he appreciated that I was in covenant with God's vision for my life knew what he was talking about, for it was so.

To you, my reader, I want to say that the success I've had over these fifty-some years I attribute to exchanging my vision for God's. **To use this key, you have to look into your own soul and consider who is in charge of the vision you are following.** Make no mistake; everybody is following some kind of vision. It's there inside you—in your thoughts, in your plans, and in your actions.

Somewhere, somehow, you will have to know God's vision for your life and follow it with a commitment that consumes you. His vision is the only one that will enable you to rise to your highest potential and find peace and contentment. And without that, people eventually die, wishing above all things that they had followed God's vision and not their own.

I pray for you to have a listening heart so God can speak in a way that you'll understand the vision He had for you when you were born.

As you follow that vision, no matter what the cost, it will bring you the fullest measure of success.

Covenanting with God's vision for you is a key that is priceless.

KEY THREE

KNOW THAT BEING WITHOUT PRAYER IS LIKE BEING WITHOUT BREATH

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

—Luke 18:1

I know a lot about the value of breath. When at seventeen I was struck down with the deadly disease of tuberculosis before the discovery of antibiotic drugs, breathing from my hemorrhaging lungs became so difficult that I could be heard from across the room trying to get my breath.

Much later, after God miraculously raised me up from that bed of affliction, my wife, Evelyn, and I raised four children. How well I remember when one of the children would get sick, particularly when the lungs or bronchial tubes were affected. They were too little to understand sickness, and our hearts would nearly break as we watched them struggle to get their breath.

To this day I hate attacks on the breathing system. How often I've prayed for individuals with asthma and other afflictions which seek to rob the person of breath!

Knowing the value of breath and what it means to be afflicted in that area, I've also discovered the value of prayer. You see, praying should be just like breathing.

You breathe in, and you breathe out. It's a natural rhythm. And I like to use the analogy that **being without prayer is like being without breath. Really, not praying will lead to spiritual death just as not breathing will lead to natural death.**

I've lived without being able to catch my breath, and I've also lived at times without prayer. As a rebellious teenager, I dismissed prayer as a nothing, as totally unnecessary. I left it out of my life altogether.

Many times when bad things happened—and sooner or later bad things do happen—it never occurred to me to pray.

One day my mother, Claudius Priscilla Roberts, who was a praying woman, saw that I was having a really hard time. "Son," she said, "you've got to pray."

"Mama," I replied, "what will prayer accomplish? Besides, I don't know how to pray."

She took me in her arms, looked into my eyes, and said, "Oral, you don't have to know how to pray. **All you have to do is talk to God just like you talk tome.**"

"You mean prayer is talking to God?"

"Yes," she said.

I thought about that. At first it didn't sink in. Later, when I was so ill and my life was flowing out of me, Papa came to my bed and knelt to pray for me.

Still, I did not pray. My breathing was terrible. My life without prayer, without talking to God, was miserable too, although I hadn't yet grasped the truth and power of prayer.

Papa prayed and wouldn't stop. "I'm going to pray

until you get saved," he had announced to me as he knelt by my bedside. Now I'd heard him pray all of my life, but I'd never prayed myself. I didn't know that being without prayer is like being without breath. But I did know what it was to run out of breath as death hovered near.

Lying there, I looked up into Papa's face. I don't know how it happened, but when his face faded and I glimpsed the countenance of Jesus where my father's face had been, something inside me broke up. Words began coming out of my mouth, and I realized I was talking to God. I was praying.

Prayer changed my life that night. Soon after that, my brother carried me to the tent meeting where a healing evangelist—the first ever to come to Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, where I was born and lived—was praying for the sick. He prayed for me, and I prayed; and God healed and restored my lungs! I didn't die but lived, and soon prayer became as important to me as my breath. It still is. **I've seen more miracles come by prayer than by any other way in my healing ministry.**

Jesus expressed this powerful key to success so well in Luke 18:1: *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*

I think everybody prays, whether they realize it or not. Why do I say that? Because when in trouble, people reach out to someone or something they consciously or unconsciously think is greater than themselves. The difference between prayer and just reaching out blindly to God is that in prayer you are *talking* to God, the One who is the Source of all that is good. Talking to God becomes a natural rhythm, just like the natural rhythm of breathing in

and breathing out. And the God who hears even the quietest sound hears every word and every breathing of prayer in your heart.

**My mother gave me the best recipe
for prayer I ever heard, and that's
just to talk to the Lord.**

This all-important key of prayer is totally and absolutely one that leads to success.

KEY FOUR

PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

. . . praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

—Ephesians 6:18

In I Corinthians 14:13-15 the apostle Paul talks about the key of praying in the Spirit. He said:

Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Notice that in this Scripture, Paul is speaking autobiographically. He says he prays with both the Spirit and his understanding (or his mind) by his *will* (or his determination) to do it. No man has ever prayed more effectively than this anointed man, who wrote nearly a third of the New Testament and was the most effective soul winner, healer of the sick, and establisher of the early

Christian church.

I'd rather believe the apostle Paul knew how to pray than listen to critics who say that praying in tongues is of the devil. Paul prayed in the Spirit and then interpreted God's response back to his mind, thereby getting a whole-person understanding to prayer and how to get results.

I use this key because I believe the Bible more *than* I do man or any religious leader who has either not seen the light on praying in the Spirit and receiving the interpretation back to the mind or has seen it but rejected it.

But best of all, I've experienced the success of practicing this key on a daily basis year after year, and it helps me pray better with my understanding after I've first prayed in the Spirit.

Using this key is important. Here are a few reasons why:

First, communication is everything. Unless you can communicate, you can't make it. Communicating with God is the most important of all, and He has given us the prayer language, or tongues, as the best way to communicate with Him.

Second, your communication system is twofold. Your tongue, the organ of your vocal communication, is connected to your mind, which tells the tongue what to say. But your tongue is also connected with your spirit, which is who you are. Just as your mind, which is connected with your vocal organ, can tell that organ what to say, so your spirit, which is filled with the Holy Spirit, can tell the tongue what to say. In other words, the Holy

Spirit tells your tongue what to say.

The important difference is that when you first pray with your spirit in the Spirit, it is the real you talking, not your mind, which unlike your spirit is mortal and severely handicapped by being human.

Jesus made this clear in John 7:38, 39 when He said:

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

When you're Spirit filled, out of your belly—the area where your spirit resides—flow rivers of living water, or the Holy Spirit. In other words, when you are filled with the Spirit, He acts upon your spirit, bringing forth a flow of tongues in the same way that a river flows. The Holy Spirit enables you to talk to God in His inspired utterance, using words you can't say simply by using your mind to direct your tongue.

When you pray in the Spirit, you are talking directly to God. You are communicating your deepest needs and feelings to Him, and when you communicate this way, nothing can get between you and God. It is marvelous, it is valuable, and it happens by your will, your determination to do it.

Third, after praying in the Spirit you can listen

for the interpretation, or what God's response is—whether it's a word, a sentence, or a dialogue.

Many people have asked me how they can hear God speaking to them. The best way I know is first to pray in the Spirit to Him and then listen for the interpretation of your tongues back to your mind. What you hear in your spirit is not a translation of tongues but an interpretation either of what you said to God or what His response is to your praying to Him in tongues.

Don't let this great Bible experience frighten or trouble you. I know I did for several years. But when it came time for me to build God a university, I didn't know how. So I prayed in the Spirit, and almost immediately God responded, speaking back to me and giving me the understanding of how to build it.

Today in Tulsa, Oklahoma, you can visit Oral Roberts University and see for yourself the result of my praying in the Spirit in order for my understanding to open up to God's knowledge.

Building ORU is only one result I've had by using the key of praying in the Spirit. I pray that way daily by my desire and my will, and I usually wait and listen for the interpretation. I've learned, as Paul said, that the two go together.

If you're reading this today and don't have the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit but you want to have it, write for a free copy of my book, *Unleashing the Power of Praying in the Spirit*. In it, I show you in depth how to receive this precious gift which will dramatically change your life.

Friend, praying in the Spirit is vital to our Christian walk. Know this: God equipped Adam with a deeper system of communicating with Him. But Adam lost it in the Fall in the Garden of Eden.

Receiving Christ and being baptized with the Holy Spirit restores this communication system with God for the individual believer.

It is one of the most indispensable keys to success.

KEY FIVE

SEEK THE KEY ISSUE

He that is spiritual judgeth all things.

—I Corinthians 2:15

During my many years of ministry, I've found that in every situation there is a key issue. In other words, there's the heart of the matter, the bottom line. If you can find the key issue and work from there, you will have a solid base on which to build success.

I vividly remember times when I was in what one of my associates described as my "stubborn spells." Yes, preachers get as stubborn as mules, just like anybody else, and because of God's calling on our lives, our stubbornness sometimes appears to be worse than other people's. I know there have been times when I've had to deal with myself about stubbornness before God would bless and use me.

For example, I never liked to go on picnics, not even with my wife and children. I'd say, "Now, Evelyn, I don't want to eat with the bugs and ants. You go ahead."

"Oh, Oral, it'll be no fun if you don't go. The children will be so disappointed," she'd answer.

Sometimes I'd "stubborn up" and not go; other times I'd go but grumble about it.

Another way I can be stubborn is when I'm at home

in my chair, where I do a lot of my writing on a yellow legal pad, and Evelyn is cleaning the house. She will say, "Oral, please go into the other room until I get this room cleaned."

I'll say, "No, I'm right in the midst of a great thought. I don't want to move."

"Well, honey, I have to clean under your chair," she'll say.

Grudgingly, I eventually get up and go into the other room. But she says I give her a look that says, *I'll do it, but I hate to.*

These seem to be little things, I suppose. However, the Bible says that it's the little foxes that spoil the vines (see Song of Solomon 2:15). And there's a song that says, "Little things mean a lot"—for good or for bad.

The key issue is to be pliable and able to accommodate others even if it is occasionally inconvenient. **Nothing of value is a surface thing. There's always something deeper involved.** That's why seeking the key issue is vital to success.

In marriage counseling, I've often asked one of the parties, "What is really wrong?" Sometimes the answer is surprising. It's some little thing that is the key issue. And if dealt with in a positive manner, working through that little problem can often settle the issue.

Once in my healing line I prayed for a beautiful woman who was dressed like a movie star. She had flaming red hair. She gave me the feeling, rightly or wrongly, that she had dressed to draw attention to herself and wanted to make an impression on me and the

audience. Quick as a flash, I felt impressed to tell her to run up and down the aisle seven times as a point of contact for her healing.

She abruptly turned around and returned to her seat.

I went on praying for the sick. In about ten minutes, I heard a shout from the audience. I looked up and saw the beautiful lady with her hands up, tears streaming down her cheeks, running up and down the aisle.

To this day I don't know if I was perfectly right in what I asked her to do. All I know is that before I could catch myself, I responded to an inner discernment that something special had to be done or this woman didn't have a prayer of receiving healing for a problem I later learned was of a very serious nature.

Afterward the woman wrote a beautiful letter of thanks for my prayers, and she said she was glad I had told her to run up and down the aisle seven times. What was the key issue? Since she received her healing, I believe I was discerning something deeper which the Holy Spirit knew. The thing I asked her to do appeared to be a public humiliation, but it was actually the key issue to her healing.

When someone is offering you a deal, whether it be business or a simple favor, it's wise to seek the key issue: Why is it being offered, and what is the bottom line? That's when you need to go off alone and pray, seek God's will in the matter, and wait for Him to show you the key issue.

One thing you can count on in every situation is that there is a key issue.

**Finding the key issue and acting on it
make all the difference in your
achieving success in life.**

KEY SIX

NEVER SAY YES WHEN YOU MEAN NO OR NO WHEN YOU MEAN YES

Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

—Matthew 5:37

Jesus was hard on hypocrites. He despised hypocrisy, especially in religious people who said yes with their mouths but no in their hearts. He flatly said, "Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay."

The person who practices this key is what you call a straight shooter—**one to walk the river with, one whom you always know where he stands, one you can count on to do right, no matter what the cost to himself.** This kind of person says yes when he means yes and no when he means no. And that's the kind of answer that is at the heart of everything that counts.

This key made an early impression on me shortly after I began my healing ministry. I had arrived in Tulsa with my darling wife, Evelyn, and the first two of our four children, with \$25 in my wallet and no place to live; yet I had God's call to locate my headquarters there because of its superior airline connections. Planes could carry me north, south, east, and west.

I knew in my spirit that God was going to catapult

my healing ministry both nationwide and throughout all continents, and that's why it was important to locate near a strong air hub. **And saying yes to His calling meant saying yes in all the little areas of life too, such as where to live and base my ministry.**

Our friends Oscar and Anna Moore invited us to spend a couple of days with them at their home on North Main Street while I looked for a house for my family. This was shortly after World War II, and the housing market was tight, both in rentals and sales.

Oscar's house was nice but small, with only two bedrooms. As soon as I walked in, the Spirit of the Lord rose up within me and said, "This is your house." Saying nothing, I listened as Oscar told us he had decided to sell his house and that the buyer was coming that evening at 6 p.m. to close the deal. I can't tell you the hurt that flowed through me. Under my breath I said, "He's selling my house!"

When I left the pastorate in Enid, Oklahoma, to come to Tulsa, the church had chosen Oscar Moore to replace me. That was why he had his house up for sale.

About an hour before dinner I told the Moores and Evelyn that I wanted to drive around town and would soon return. What I actually did was find a place to park my car and have it out with God. I told Him I had given Him my yes to His calling on my life and my yes meant yes, not no. I put my head on my steering wheel and poured out my heart to God, the tears flowing down my face.

I knew God had called me to take His healing power to my generation and later build Him a university. I was

only twenty-nine years old, but I knew it was God. **I knew I was responsible for my family, I knew Oscar Moore's house was supposed to be mine, I knew I had vowed never to touch the gold nor the glory, and I knew I meant business with God.** I was doing what the Bible says Abraham did: "He went out, not knowing where he was going," as he obeyed God's call (see Hebrews 11:8). I had made a total decision to obey God.

As I cried and prayed, the peace of God filled my being, and I felt a full release that God was going to honor my yes and work things out. With this knowing of faith in my heart, I drove back to Oscar's house. It was past 6 p.m., and Oscar said, "Well, my buyer is not here. Let's eat dinner. He'll probably be here soon."

My friend Steve Pringle had put up a thousand-seat gospel tent in Tulsa and was preaching there each night. We had planned to go to his meeting that evening after dinner. Since the buyer still had not come, Oscar said, "Oral, you go on to the revival. I'll wait for the man."

It had turned cold and rainy, and only about 150 people were present at the tent meeting. Steve, knowing of my recent call to the healing ministry, asked me to preach and pray for the sick.

The anointing was strong on me, and about twenty-five people came to the altar to be saved. I laid hands on and prayed individually for nearly everyone there to be healed. Steve asked me to stay and minister from that Tuesday night through Sunday. By Sunday the results were so tremendous in the deliverance of people that the tent was full and overflowing. I stayed nine weeks, and

that was the launching of my healing ministry big time.

When I returned to Oscar's house that first night, he said, "It's very strange. The buyer has not come. I'll give him until 8 a.m. tomorrow."

The next day, the man still hadn't come. Oscar turned to me and said, "Oral, do you want to buy this house?" Without a thought of my having only \$25, a car, and about \$300 worth of old furniture back in Enid, I quickly said, "Yes, I'll buy it!"

"Well, the price is \$6,000. You pay me \$3,000 down and take up the mortgage, and the house is yours."

"I'll take it!"

Evelyn tugged my arm and led me into the bedroom. "Are you out of your mind, Oral?" she said. "How will we get \$3,000 as a down payment when we have only \$25?"

I told her of the peace God had given me the evening before when I drove to a secluded spot and put my situation before Him. When Evelyn heard that, she entered into agreement with me that God would provide a way for us to buy the house.

As Oscar and I were driving downtown for me to sign the mortgage papers, I knew the yes I had said to Oscar and to God was not a no, and the no I had said to satan—not allowing him through circumstances to prevent me from obeying God and entering the healing ministry—was not a yes. I knew it! Every part of my life was forever on the table as far as obedience to God was concerned. I had God, and He had me. That's all I could think about.

As I started to sign the sale papers and the papers for the mortgage to cover the balance beyond the \$3,000

down payment, Oscar stopped me. "Lay the pen down," he said. "Anna and I will not be needing the \$3,000 down payment this year. Let's have the clerk change the papers so that you will make no down payment. Just sign the mortgage, and the house is yours."

"Oh, just as you say, Oscar," I said, feeling the Holy Spirit flowing up within me again. "Just as you say."

Oscar didn't know for several years that I bought his house with only \$25 in my wallet, without a prayer from the world's standpoint to make the down payment.

I paid Oscar \$12 for a desk he had, and using it as my office desk, I started this ministry. That little desk is now in the Prayer Tower on the campus of Oral Roberts University, a symbol of the moment when God knew my yes to obey Him was truly a yes and not a no.

Now if I had said yes but meant no, I don't know that God would have worked that situation out as He did. But when I said yes to His plan, He saw the obedience of my heart—that I meant yes no matter what noes the circumstances brought my way!

Life is full of yeses and noes, although not all are as serious as the one I've just shared.

Even on a smaller, day-to-day scale, you can't afford to neglect using this key. It will take you far in life!

KEY SEVEN

FLEE TEMPTATION

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

—II Timothy 2:22

As a teenager I didn't flee from certain temptations. But once I had been saved and healed, I committed my life to God for time and eternity. Constantly hearing in my spirit my mother's words, "Son, always obey God," I learned that temptation is not to be fooled with.

Temptation is the devil's sleight of hand with our minds, his appeal to our egos, an attempt to get us to think, *I can handle this*, knowing there is no way on earth any one of us can handle temptation if we play around with it.

I learned the hard way that there's only one way God has given for us to escape temptation. That way is to *flee* temptation. Run! Get away from it!

Why would God tell us to flee? James 1:14,15 tells us why. It says: *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

Everyone—this includes you and me—is tempted.

James went on to say that everyone is tempted when (and this is crucial) he himself allows his lust to be enticed by a temptation he should be fleeing from and he is led away by it so that the enticement gets him in its grip.

Oh my, how I went through this and know it is true 100 percent!

This verse adds that when a person's lust draws him into temptation and gets him caught in its enticement, then lust, like a woman getting pregnant, conceives. In yielding to temptation, your very being becomes pregnant with it. It's in you and hastens to bring forth and give birth to death! At the end of a temptation, you've yielded some part of you to death. And if you continue to yield yourself to temptation, it can ultimately lead to eternal death.

No wonder God says to flee temptation.

One day a preacher who had been greatly blessed and used of God fell into my arms, sobbing, and said, "What am I going to do?"

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"I let temptation get hold of me too many times. Now I've lost my church, my credentials, my wife—everything!"

Quick as a flash the Holy Spirit gave me a word of knowledge for him. "Do you blame others for what's happened?" I asked.

He looked at me and didn't say anything. "Do you?" I pressed.

"Well, those people shouldn't have turned against me."

"Perhaps not," I said. "But did you flee temptation?"

Didn't you know and preach to others that when lust is conceived, it brings forth a death such as this? Aren't you aware that by your own desire, your own will, you brought this on yourself?"

"But I thought if I came to you I would get comfort," he protested.

"Oh, I *am* here to comfort you," I said, and I put my arms around him and asked God to help him. But the Spirit wouldn't let me allow him to refuse to take personal responsibility for the consequences of his desire and his will.

"Will you help me?" he pleaded.

"I have helped you."

"But I still feel as if I'm dying."

"You will until you confess to God that no one else but you let your desire become lust, and lust enticed you until it became a part of you, like a balloon blown up so much that it bursts."

He knew the Word. After a time, he stood up like a man of God and said, "God is right, and I am wrong. I'm going to right my wrongs."

"Then what?" I asked.

"I don't know. But at least I'll get my soul right with God."

"May I suggest that you get alone with God as much as possible, and don't talk about this to anyone unless you can trust that person enough to pray for you. If you have any money, sow some as seed to God so He will have your faith to work with in restoring what you let satan rob from you."

I didn't see or hear of this man for several months. The next time I did, I learned he was pastoring a small church and working hard at it; he had won his wife back, and people were beginning to speak well of him again. But the key to his success was his fleeing the temptation that had him bound.

Fleeing temptation is what the apostle described when he said, *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you* (James 4:7). Resist. Don't think you can whip the devil by yourself: you can, however, resist him. And the Word of God declares that satan will flee from a resister.

The best way I know to develop the habit of fleeing from temptation and resisting the devil is to make it a way of life until it becomes your attitude. One thing is certain in this life: Temptation will come at you. However, temptation is powerless in itself, as is the devil who instigates it.

Only if you have any lust or desire in you toward a particular temptation is there any chance that you can yield to it. No one is going to force you to do it. Not even satan has the power to force you to yield against your will. This is something I have learned, and I mean, I've learned it well. It has helped me understand that Oral Roberts and God are a majority. When we are together, temptation cannot—I repeat, cannot!—get inside my will.

One of the delights of my life is knowing that many, many people have faced temptations of all kinds, and instead of yielding to any desire or lust inside, by their faith in God and their will, they turned and FLED! And they still follow this formula laid down by Jesus—a

Flee Temptation

formula which will never fail any one of us.

As I write, I'm in prayer that God will excite us about putting Him and His way first in our lives as we put this key into practice and flee temptation.

KEY EIGHT

'BE THERE IN THE MORNING'

My God is the rock of my refuge.

—Psalm 94:22

Several years ago a Tulsa businessman said to me, "Oral, I have a good story to share with you."

"Fine," I replied.

"Do you know what a mountain climber does when he is climbing back down the mountain, night is falling, and a storm is coming up?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, the first thing he does is stop before it gets dark. Then he finds a crevice, climbs into it with all of his gear, anchors his body to the rock wall, and stays there the rest of the night."

"Isn't that terribly uncomfortable?" I asked.

"Yes, it is. But the important thing to him is to be there in the morning."

I've never gotten away from the message of that story. Time after time I've had occasion to remember: *Be there in the morning*. I've discovered it is a lesson that works in every area of life's experiences.

Several things about this key have helped me to succeed.

First, all of life is in one way or another about

climbing mountains. There's both exhilaration and danger in climbing up and then coming back down.

I once saw Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to climb Mount Everest, which at over 29,000 feet—nearly six miles—is the tallest mountain on earth. He told of the formidable task of climbing to the summit: the swirling, icy winds; the treacherous passes; thin ice that looked safe to walk on; the thin, oxygen-poor air; the task of carrying tent and gear for all kinds of challenges; the sheer fatigue and seeming impossibility of reaching the top; and the presence of death every hour.

Even with all that he endured during the ascent, Hillary declared that **coming down can be the most dangerous part of the climb.** It was for him. Exhilarated that he had reached the moun-taintop—he was the first person to look at the world from the earth's loftiest height—the very joy of his accomplishment made him careless, even to the point of thinking it would be easier coming down. Such an attitude could have cost him his life. But Hillary learned above all to take extra care so he would be there in the morning.

I learned the difficult lesson of this key early in my ministry—in 1947 and 1948, while I was still learning to pray for the increasingly large crowds of sick people and others in trouble. I was young and vigorous, full of faith, and fearless, thinking that everybody I prayed for would be delivered.

I noticed that many epileptics were being healed. So one night, after I felt I could scale the mountain of this affliction for God, I almost failed to "be there in the

morning." In other words, I'd reached the top of the mountain, but I didn't realize the danger of the climb back down.

Another epileptic had just been brought forward for prayer, only this one was demon-possessed—something I knew in my spirit by the gift of discerning of spirits according to I Corinthians 12:10. But I was feeling exhilarated over the many great victories of healing and deliverance we'd won over satan's oppression of these dear afflicted ones.

I found myself saying, *Okay, satan, you've been throwing victims like this to the floor, trying to hurt or kill them. Let's see you do it to this one.* I know now that it was satan who had put that crazy thought in my mind, and I had foolishly embraced it. It's strange how you often act your worst right after a success.

Well, as I reached out to lay hands on this tormented boy, satan threw his body violently to the floor in a fit of convulsions. People nearby screamed. I knelt down to call the demonic spirits out, but nothing happened. Suddenly all the success we'd had in that service was in danger of turning to defeat. People were more than apprehensive; they were afraid. A shiver of fear went through me.

I prayed and prayed, and I called and called the spirits out. Nothing happened. Satan was resisting, and defeat was staring me in the face. Many ministers were there to see God do His miracles through me, and suddenly I became aware that they were watching me carefully as I worked to bring deliverance to this boy.

Sweat popped out on my face and then all over my

body. Soon I was almost wringing wet. And nothing was happening. The boy was still having convulsions. He was almost swallowing his tongue, his body was jerking up and down on the floor, and the spirits in him were screaming their anger at me, using his voice.

Spiritually, I hadn't seen the storm coming. I hadn't realized the most vital lesson to being there in the morning: **You must tie yourself into a crevice of total dependence on God.** Instead, I had been feeling cocky, which is dangerous, dangerous—and foolish to the extreme!

Suddenly, I stopped praying for the boy, turned away, and told God how sorry I was. I admitted to Him how I was throwing away all the successes we'd had, and I asked Him to please forgive me—if not for my sake, then for His and for the sake of the innocent little fellow writhing on the floor, overcome by satan's demonic spirits.

God forgave me. And I knew He had when His power began to flow up from the pit of my stomach, down my right arm, and into my hand, which I laid on the boy. This time, when in Jesus' mighty Name I called the demons out by their name and number, they came out one by one, screaming, leaving the little boy lying there as if he were dead. I picked him up as I called strength into his body, and he stood up, healed and free!

Many times since, I've shuddered at how close I came that night to not being there in the morning. If I hadn't turned and anchored myself to the Rock, Jesus Christ, I might have lost my healing ministry just as it was getting started.

So much hangs in the balance for you and me concerning using the key of anchoring ourselves to God our Source so we will be there in the morning. The important thing is to not lose God's presence, but hold on to His unchanging hand. When you make a mistake, quickly admit it. Confess to God that you're operating in your own heady way, and cry. "God, forgive me. and by Your help I'll never do this again."

As for me, I don't recall ever being that foolish again. Perhaps that's why I've lasted some fifty years of being there in the morning. This key is yours also.

I pray that the principle of being there in the morning—no matter how uncomfortable it may be to stay anchored in the crevice of the Rock—will take new wings in your spirit so that you may live victoriously and climb another mountain!

KEY NINE

DON'T LOVE PRAISE OF YOURSELF

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

—I Corinthians 1:31

I once heard the great actor Charlton Heston, who played the part of Moses in *The Ten Commandments*—that mighty motion picture which moved me so deeply—tell about a stage play he did with Laurence Olivier, who is often called the number one actor of this century.

Heston said, "The critics were panning the play, and negative comments were coming in. Some even suggested that we close the show. But among the letters there was one from a lady praising us, telling us how great we were and how she hoped the play would go on.

"I said to Olivier, 'Doesn't that woman's praise do a lot for you at a time like this?' He said, 'It's a little light in the darkness, but it won't help me be a better actor nearly as much as these critics will.'"

Then Heston said, **"I've never forgotten that. When praise is heaped on me for playing Moses, Ben-Hur, and other classic roles, I've recalled Olivier's words. I've learned never to love praise of myself."**

This story made me think about how Jesus dealt with praise during His earthly ministry. People often approached Him, saying things like, "Master, we know

Thou art a teacher sent from God, but ..." Jesus knew that when people started praising Him, there would follow a "but," and then the criticism and threats would come. Jesus learned never to love praise of Himself.

I also thought of when Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra on their first missionary journey. (See Acts 14:8-20.) Paul brought God's healing power to a totally crippled man, and the whole town turned out, calling both him and Barnabas gods and attempting to make blood sacrifices to them. It was a heady moment.

But Paul ripped his clothes and cried out to the people that he was only a man. He told them that they should turn to the living God, who created heaven and earth. Verse 18 says, *And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.*

Paul knew the dangers of being praised. Not long after that incident enemies came from other cities and turned the same people who had praised Paul into a mob who stoned him and left him for dead. But God miraculously raised him up, and Paul went on with his ministry.

The praises of men can be a dangerous thing.

I remember the first three nights of the biggest crusade I ever conducted. The people were almost wild with joy over the move of God in their midst, but the third night ended with a mob assaulting me. Under threat of death, I barely escaped with my life!

Now that's an extreme example. But on a lesser scale, you can count on praise giving little substance or

value to whatever you're doing in the long run. It is actually the forces that come against you which test your true mettle and determine what you are really made of.

For example, in the fifty-some years of this healing ministry, the amount of good press I've had from the media has been very small, but the opposition has been fierce and steady. As I look back, I realize that had the media been for me too much, it would have caused me to believe my press clippings more than God and I would never have become the survivor I am.

Yes, I'm afraid of praise. My natural man wants it, but my spiritual man says a little goes a long way. Like Dr. Warren Hultgren, former pastor of Tulsa's First Baptist Church and a dear friend of mine, said in sharing with me, "Oral, praise is like perfume. It's great to smell, but if you drink the bottle, it'll make you sick."

I realized this truth through a special and most unusual friend who was a constant observer of me as I did God's healing work. In our healing crusades there were times of great success: huge crowds, wide acceptance, thousands converted in a single service, thousands healed, financial needs met, and lots of appreciation. This friend would always show up at such times—times when I was glowing with my success for the Lord. And he would say the same thing on every such occasion: **"Oral, you can do better."**

At times I wanted him just to fade away, because there were so few times of high praise. Being mortal, I loved praise. But here he would appear, saying, "Oral, you can do better."

He left it to others to encourage me when things were tough, but he never failed then or now to come to me when he thought praise might turn my head and say, "Oral, you can do better."

I came to appreciate this friend more than the encouragers, although they, too, meant a lot to me. I learned that he was sent from God to tell me those words to remind me that I was not to love praise of myself.

It's evident that God saw a weakness in me, something satan could use to get me to stumble and eventually quit. I'm convinced that God fears praise of me more than He does opposition. A little praise goes a long way. I need to smell it but not drink the whole bottle.

This secret of success lies in making a right appraisal of yourself in the middle of both praise and opposition.

Mama always told me, "Son, stay little in your own eyes." No better advice for success can be given to anyone.

KEY TEN

GIVE OTHERS THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

Love ... is ever ready to believe the best of every person.

—I Corinthians 13:7 AMPLIFIED

In my life and ministry I've had many opportunities to give others the benefit of the doubt, but I've also had opportunities to refuse to give it. I've done both.

I've proven to myself over and over that when I give someone the benefit of the doubt, I'm on God's side, and He's on my side. And I've given the person another chance as well.

There's a little verse of poetry from William Cullen Bryant's poem "The Battlefield," which I've lived by for many years. It goes like this:

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.

I remember a time when I had the opportunity to put this key into practice. Years ago there was a man who had done something against my ministry that had really hurt me. But the Lord showed me that my hurt was bitterness and I was to give him the benefit of the doubt by writing

him a letter and apologizing. Now if any man ever owed *me* an apology, he did! But I sat down and wrote, "Dear Brother, I have wronged you. I have had thoughts against you that weren't of the Lord. Will you forgive me?"

That man who I thought would never be friendly to me wrote back the sweetest letter. He said, "You don't owe me an apology; I owe you one." And he apologized for the things he'd done. Now we're wonderful friends in the Lord, but only because I gave him the benefit of the doubt first.

Giving someone the benefit of the doubt is not always easy. But as I like to say, any old dead fish can float downstream. It takes a live one to swim upstream!

Following the truth of doing the right thing and giving a person the benefit of the doubt pays and pays. I carry precious memories of times I've done this, although it wasn't always appreciated. But it blessed me. It was right for me to do so, and I felt better. I knew that in giving the benefit of the doubt I had given as Jesus said to do in Luke 6:38.

Of course, it has sometimes blown up in my face. Some people didn't appreciate it when I gave them the benefit of the doubt, and instead they let me down. Worst of all, they let God and themselves down. But I still felt good, even cheerful, because I knew I had done the right thing.

I recall one person I gave the benefit of the doubt to who ended up stealing from my ministry, much like the disciple Judas stole from Jesus. After it was all over and he was gone, we faced the losses, and someone said,

"Oral, why did you give him the benefit of the doubt?"

Good question, I thought.

But when I remembered something Jesus said to Judas, I knew why I'd given that man the benefit of the doubt.

There came a time near the end of Jesus' life when He knew Judas had let satan enter him and he had become a betrayer. Jesus looked at His disciples and said, *There are some of you that believe not.* And the Bible adds, *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him* (John 6:64).

Yet Jesus gave Judas the benefit of the doubt—for a while. On the last night of His life, as Jesus sat at the table with His disciples, He told them that the one He gave a piece of bread to would betray Him. Then, giving it to Judas, He said, "What you're going to do, do quickly" (see John 13:27).

Jesus knew what Judas would do, which was betray Him that night. He also knew Judas had blown his opportunity ever to be given the benefit of the doubt again by the Savior.

As I thought on this, I was struck by something. I realized that when Judas—one out of the twelve disciples—walked away from Jesus, it meant that 8 percent of His disciples betrayed Him.

It came to me strongly that Jesus' betrayal by Judas symbolized the pattern of what some followers or close friends we develop will do. A percentage of them will turn against us. You can almost count on it. Sometimes even our closest friends turn against us.

Instead of crying, "Why?" we should look at Jesus who, knowing what Judas would do, still gave him the benefit of the doubt. It appeared that Jesus lost by doing so. In a sense, He did temporarily. But He didn't lose the other eleven disciples, and God did raise Him from the dead, while Judas committed suicide. His name stands for betrayal, and he did it in spite of the benefit of the doubt given him right up to the end. But Jesus is our Lord and Savior—eternally.

You see, even if it hurts at the time and even if a person betrays you, there is an eternal benefit to giving people the benefit of the doubt.

I thank God that in my own life I've been given the benefit of the doubt many times, and I thank those who gave it to me. Doubtless, they showed me the mercy of God, and it gave me strength to keep holding on. The times that neither friends nor adversaries gave me the benefit of the doubt were not easy to bear. But remembering the times I was blessed by receiving the benefit of the doubt outweighs any hurt I felt when I was refused it. It makes me a grateful man.

It all comes down to giving the benefit of the doubt and seeing it both work wonders and even sometimes let you down.

Just remember, "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again" when you give with your whole heart!

KEY ELEVEN

MAKE NO PLACE FOR JEALOUSY OR ENVY

A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

—Proverbs 14:30

The Bible gives the distinct impression that envy is linked with rottenness of the bones like a cancer eating up the body. But it is also linked to murder. Matthew 27:18 says that at Jesus' death trial, Pilate *knew that for envy they [the Jews] had delivered him.*

I don't know of anyone who hasn't allowed envy to eat at his or her insides at times. I know I have, and I've always been the worse for it. Only in making my confession to God in true repentance and receiving His cleansing on a continual basis have I had any success in overcoming envy.

How does envy get in? It got into Cain, Adam and Eve's firstborn son, when he saw the excellence of his younger brother Abel's blood sacrifice to God. (See Genesis 4:3-13.)

Now Abel had made a blood sacrifice in obedience to God's way of atoning for his sins. And Cain envied God's acceptance of his brother's sacrifice. But instead of obeying God as Abel did, Cain did it his own way, which

was contrary to God's way. When God rejected Cain's bloodless sacrifice, envy condemned him, and he murdered his brother, committing the world's first felony. When he was visited by God's judgment, Cain cried out to the Lord, *My punishment is greater than I can bear* (v. 13).

Envy and jealousy—in many ways they are the same. They lead to wrath, spite, and violence one way or another.

On the way to the Cross, Jesus felt and knew in Himself that His enemies were delivering Him up because they were envious and jealous of Him.

Sometimes we can even be envious or jealous of someone who is bad. This evil tendency has no respect of persons. It is color-blind and religion-blind. It's a work of the devil.

But—and this is very important to know—envy and jealousy have no place in a heart open to God, for the Spirit of God within and the will of the believer say, "No, these feelings shall not be part of my life. I will make no place in me for them."

This decision must be made in the deepest part of your being, regardless of how others treat you or if they appear to be something you're not or have something you don't. And such a decision is the dividing line between having a good spirit toward people or being envious and jealous of them. It can be done and is being done by countless numbers of people who follow the Lord with their whole heart.

I was asked once by a nice-looking man, "How do I

get envy of others out of my heart?"

"You seem to have everything. How could you be envious?" I asked.

"Oh, don't let appearances deceive you," he answered. "I put on a good front, but inside I'm seething with a jealous spirit."

I gave him three ways, based on the Bible and drawn from my personal experience, on how to overcome envy and jealousy.

"First," I said, "you are made in God's own image, or class, and He gave His only Son to die for you to be saved from *all* sin. He also sent the Holy Spirit to live in you and walk beside you as your divine Helper. Therefore, you have God's miraculous and never-failing help to rid yourself of envy or jealousy of anyone."

As he was thinking that over, I continued, **"Second, you have faith,** for as Romans 12:3 says, *God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*"

I opened my Bible and had him read that Scripture out loud to me. When he did, he said, "Does that mean God has given *me* a measure of faith?"

I nodded and said, "I used to think faith was something I had to get, so I always prayed for God to give me faith. Then I discovered Romans 12:3 and realized that faith is not something I or anyone has to get; it is something we already have. But you must loose it to God. **Your faith has got to come out of you and be released to the Lord for deliverance.**"

"I never thought of it that way," he said. "This

changes everything for me, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does," I answered.

I went on, "**And third, nothing you're jealous over is ever worth it, either in the short haul or the long run.** It's never, ever worth it. You'll always find that what you obtain because of jealousy will ultimately turn against you."

The man took those words to heart, and before long he had overcome that jealous spirit.

The effect of envy or jealousy on the person harboring them is serious. I look back at the chilling effect envy had on those Jewish religious leaders, whose jealousy of Jesus caused them to deliver Him up to the Cross. They had to bear the consequences of their actions as long as they lived on this earth—and into eternity.

The next time you hear someone say, "Oh, you're just jealous," perhaps you should take a long, honest look into your heart and check it out. The heartening thing is that Jesus can and will cleanse you of all envy and jealousy, freeing you to live a life of appreciation for others and leave to God those whose behavior and seeming success you are allowing to get to you.

Jesus didn't have a jealous bone in His body, and you and I can be like Him and in the same way live a victorious life!

KEY TWELVE

CULTIVATE THE HABIT OF SAYING POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT OTHERS

Speak not evil of one another, brethren.

—James 4:11

There seems to be a secret communication system that carries the things you say about others to them. Whether it's a positive thing you say about someone or something unpleasant, some force seems to carry it to them sooner or later.

I've discovered with nearly everyone that if I say something nice about them, something I can honestly praise, it comes back to me how pleased or pleasantly surprised they are by it. But if I say negative words, they seem to be carried to the person even faster; and as a friend of mine once said, "The fat's in the fire!"

I'm reminded of a Christian woman who always had something nice to say about everyone. Her two mischievous boys decided to trap her one day. "Mom," they said, "you'd even say something nice about the devil."

Without batting an eye, she replied, "Well, he **is** a faithful devil."

Jesus practiced saying positive things about His disciples and others as well. **The thrust of His words**

throughout His ministry was, "It can be done, and you can do it." Only when a person's unbelief and acts of evil had reached their climax did He use any strong words of condemnation.

King David reached the place in life where he could say, *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer* (Psalm 19:14). David had said positive words about people but also some negative ones. When it got right down to it, he knew the only key to success in this area was to determine that his words and meditations would be those that pleased God.

Words have great power either to hurt or help! When God's time came for me to enter the healing ministry in 1947, a man who I thought was my friend said, "Oral will last about two months." Of course, his words reached me almost immediately, and I felt their wounds.

After I'd lasted two months, he said, "I'll give him two years at the most." I heard when he said that too. That secret communication system was working. Each time someone felt it necessary to tell me what my friend had said. But by that time I felt no wounding from his words. I had believed God, I had made up my mind to obey Him no matter what the cost to myself, and I had a knowing in my heart that I was in His perfect will. The results of obeying God were overwhelmingly good, and I knew that I knew that I knew I was following His calling for my life.

Others predicted all kinds of disasters for me and my ministry, and I think I heard them all. But none of their predictions came true. Over the years I learned to plant my

seeds of faith, pray in the Spirit, and expect miracles—and I was getting them. Those were some of the things that kept me from failing as all of my critics said I would.

I repeat, I had made up my mind to obey God, and that was the way it was. It didn't matter how many negative things people said about me.

However, there have been a few times when, in the heat of a crisis or in a moment of carelessness with my own words. I've said things about people which, although true, should never have been said. I said things that were unworthy of me. Each time, the person I talked about learned of my words—even if I had said them to someone I thought I could trust—and was very hurt. When I began to realize the power of words, I saw that I must always keep a guard over my mouth.

Recently, my longtime friend Ralph Wilkerson, a pastor who has had a tremendously positive influence on my life, said to me, "Oral, I've never once heard you say anything but something positive about another person." I knew then that I was gaining ground on the devil and I wouldn't have to answer for any more negative words coming from my mouth. It was a great feeling.

How do you cultivate saying positive things about others? These three ways help me:

First, say nothing if at all possible. As my mother used to say to me, "Son, keep your mouth shut." Sometimes when my darling wife, Evelyn, sees I am about to say something bad about a person, she says, "Don't say it, Oral." She has helped me, and I'm grateful. And my dear friend Ken Copeland once told me, "I absolutely

refuse to be dominated by my tongue. But I determine to dominate my tongue by my will, so that any word coming out of my mouth will line up with the Word of God." If you know Ken, you know that's true in his life.

In James 1:26 and 3:2 we're advised to bridle the tongue. We can do it, or the Word of God would not have told us to do it. I know this: When I am in control of my will and my emotions, there is no way satan or any person can prevent me from keeping my mouth shut, from saying nothing instead of spouting off at the mouth about someone, whether they deserve it or not.

Second, consider how just one negative word can destroy someone who is weak in the faith. Jesus is so tender with those who are weak (see Luke 17:1, 2). We should follow His example and treat people with tender, loving care. That means we monitor our words—if we say anything at all.

I've seen people I thought were strong in God literally collapse in tears over learning what someone they respected said about them negatively. Face it; some seemingly strong people of God simply fall apart over unkind words. They should be strong and throw off the words, but people are people. It has helped me so much to learn that you never have to apologize for any negative word you don't say.

Third, fix your heart, and you'll fix your mouth. David reached the place where he said, *My heart is fixed, O God* (Psalm 57:7). You see, God doesn't do all the fixing. We have to do our part in fixing our heart. I like the saying, "Without God I cannot; without me He will

not."

You've heard it said, "Watch your mouth." I've found that what we should say is, "Watch your *heart*." Fill up your heart with the love of Jesus. If on the bloody cross, with His body and being suffering beyond our comprehension, Jesus could say, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*, then if we seek to be like Him, we, too, will have His loving Spirit (Luke 23:34). In fact, of the seven statements Jesus made on the cross, not one of them was a negative word against another person.

Stephen, a deacon of the early church who was stoned for testifying of Jesus, is another example of a man who filled up his heart with the love of Jesus. As the rocks were hitting and knocking the life out of him, this believer looked up to heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, looking down at him. (See Acts 7:55-60.) Stephen cried in a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*, and then died, becoming the first recorded Christian martyr (v. 60).

The only reason Stephen was able to say those powerful, life-lifting words was that he had already cultivated the habit of saying positive things about others. And because he had made up his mind, he and God fixed his heart, and his heart controlled his mouth.

**This key of saying positive things
about others is absolutely necessary
to your success.**

KEY THIRTEEN

BE A FRIEND AND MAKE FRIENDS

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly.

—Proverbs 18:24

The Bible tells us that to make friends, we must first be a friend. And we're also told in Proverbs 18:24, *There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

Someone said that a friend is someone who knows you—all of your good and bad qualities—and yet stands by you. That is the true test of friendship.

I have been asked how many real friends I have. My answer has always been, "As many as I'm a friend to first." **What I have experienced over and over is that it's not what others do to me that counts, but it's what I do to them.** It's not how they strike at me, fail me, or betray me; it's whether I do the same to them or not that makes the difference in using this key to success.

With all the ups and downs of the twelve disciples, who later rose up to become the founding apostles of the Christian church, it was Jesus' practice to be true and steady toward them. Then came the moment when He said, *Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends* (John 15:15).

All the disciples save one, Judas, had finally broken through their own failures in following Him—in letting

Him down in critical times and in letting themselves down. Jesus saw that they were "sticking closer than a brother."

Oh, to hear Jesus saying to you and me. "You are My friends!" He is our friend and was before we were born—yes, even before the foundation of the world (see Ephesians 1:4). This of all truths—that Jesus is personally involved in our lives—has had the deepest effect upon me, and it is the reason why in public I sometimes try to sing one special song. That song is called, "When He Reached Down His Hand for Me." I sing it like this:

Once my soul was afar from the heavenly way,
I was wretched and blind as could be;
But my Savior in love turned my darkness to day,
When He reached down His hand for me.

(chorus)

When my Savior reached down for me,
When He reached down His hand for me;
I was lost and undone, without God or His Son,
When He reached down His hand for me.

I was near to despair when He came to me there,
And He told me that I could be free;
Then He lifted my soul out of Satan's dark snare,
When He reached down His hand for me.

(chorus)

Be a Friend and Make Friends

Now my soul doth rejoice since I made Him my choice,

In the tempest to Him I can flee;

There to lean on His arm, safe, secure from all harm,

Since He reached down His hand for me.

(chorus)

That song is my testimony. Although I am not a singer, when I do sing it, I live it. And no matter how my voice sounds, it never fails to touch the hearts of the people listening.

Another old song I grew up on has the same message:

What a friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear;

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,

O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer!

It is said in the Word of God that Jesus loved us before we loved Him (see I John 4:10). **That's the key issue: To make friends, we must be a friend first.**

Yes, sometimes God sovereignly sends someone to be a friend before we even know that person. That's a

great blessing. But more often we must make the first venture of faith to befriend people. Many of them, according to my experience, will not fail to be a friend in return. But we can't miss making friends. At least a few will be real to us when we are a friend to them first.

Jesus said in Luke 6:38 that we are first to give and then expect a return from Him. I remind you of this Scripture because the same principle is true in making friends.

Someone once told me, "I can count my true friends on the fingers of one hand." Maybe that was so, but I wonder how many times that person sought to be a friend first, how often he befriended people.

There have been certain people I've prayed for, ministered to with God's saving and healing love, or gone out of my way to share the gifts of God in me with. And time after time, those have been the people who have later stepped forward to help me in a time of need.

Today in my healing ministry, those who helped me build Oral Roberts University and now are helping me build our Christian television network, as well as supporting all we're doing for God, are individuals and groups I can count on. I know they will stand by me. But it is important for me to remember that I've sown many, many seeds into their lives, and God is giving me the harvest of those seeds. The Bible says, *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap* (Galatians 6:7).

I've discovered in making friends and being a friend that nothing works as well as first sowing good seeds into other people's lives and doing it continuously.

True, some will never respond. But people are not your source—God is. However, if they don't respond, the God of the harvest will bring others to be friends to you from the seeds of friendship you first planted.

I value this key to success highly.

KEY FOURTEEN

DON'T EXPECT SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

—Galatians 6:7

A friend told me of a man who wanted to buy a fine farm down in the rich soil by a river. It was owned by a widow. He carefully planned his approach to buy it for less than it was worth. He said to her, "Ma'am, I want to buy your farm, but I'm not one of those big rich people. I'm just a guy struggling to get along."

The widow replied, "If that's the condition you're in, you must not have cast your bread upon the waters so it could come back to you."

Chagrined, he knew she had his number, and he gave up trying to get her farm.

The Bible does say, *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days* (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

It seems to me, in looking at myself and in observing a great many people, that **there is a tendency in most of us at times to expect something for nothing or to think that people owe us something.** Even if we don't express this out loud, it still seems to come up in our consciousness, and we often judge certain people by how

they respond or don't respond according to our expectations.

For example, when things aren't going right or we're not getting ahead as fast as we think we should, there is a spoken or sometimes unspoken idea inside us that so-and-so should be doing something special for us or at least smoothing our way.

To our parents we may say, "You should give me this or do this for me because I didn't ask to be born, and you gave birth to me." To friends or to someone we feel is able to help us we say, "You've got everything; share some of it with me."

I could go on and on with the analogy. But expecting something for nothing from people won't work. Rather, more often than not, it engenders hostility or outright opposition.

I've had personal experiences with expecting something from people, and each time I did, I ran up against a brick wall. I learned early on that the one I should go to is the Lord—and myself. That does not mean that when my parents or others learned of my need, some help wasn't given to me. But I also learned that it wasn't always free. There's a word, *reciprocity*, which means, "I do for you, and you do for me." Reciprocity works sometimes. **Ultimately, however, everything of value you undertake ends up being between you and the Lord.**

In school I found that I could get some help with my studies, but in the end I had to learn for myself. In pastoring a church, I received some help from other

ministers. But in the end, I had to make my own decisions and work through my own calling and goals.

In having a healing ministry, only one godly man of high standing gave me any encouragement. Others in so many words told me, "You will fail." My own preacher father at first couldn't see my vision and was negative about my starting the healing ministry. It took a whole year before he saw for himself how God was leading me. His change to positive support was inspiring, but thank God, by that time I had already reached an understanding that it was between God and me. I was well established by the time Papa came aboard.

In building Oral Roberts University, my top twelve men mutinied, declaring that if I went ahead with building it, they would leave their positions in my ministry. Their fear was that I would leave the healing ministry when I built the university. I heard them out and thanked them for what they had done to help make my healing ministry a success. I told them I understood that success without a successor is failure, and in building ORU, I was preserving the healing ministry God had called me to.

I told the men that if they had to leave, there would be no hard feelings on my part, but I had to obey God, with or without them.

The men went into another room to talk it over while I waited, leaning hard on God for the outcome. Presently they returned, and my general office manager said, "Oral, we just wanted to be sure God was in this. Now we know He is. We're with you all the way." And they stayed with me and were helpful beyond my power to describe.

Had I looked to those men and expected something from them while they were seeking to prove me and had I yielded to the negative thoughts rising in me instead of keeping God's calling between Him and me, that meeting could have been very hurtful and destructive. But I didn't expect something for nothing. In other words. I didn't expect them to be loyal to me as I followed God's vision without giving them something to believe in.

Marriage is another good example of how you cannot expect something for nothing. In our marriage I can't expect Evelyn to do my part, nor can she count on me to do hers. Neither of us can expect something for nothing. If we do, it's a one-way street that leads to a dead end. But if we both give to each other, we can expect God to give back to us what we need.

It's often quite helpful when people go out of their way to help you. But if they don't, that need not be the end. After all, nothing people can do for you will equal what your faith in God and your own efforts can do. I've discovered that if I accept the fact that nobody owes me anything and I must depend on God and myself, then I often have help from people as well, some of whom I don't even know.

In all of my recollections, I don't remember one person who properly used this key to success who made it a practice to lean on others or expected them to do for him what he could do himself with the help of God.

It's nice to get help. In the long run we will need others' help, but the best way I know for that to happen is to do something for others first. At the same time, don't

Don't Expect Something for Nothing

look to people as your source. They are human and can fail you, regardless of how much they think of you. But God, who is your true Source, will never fail you.

Look to God, then to yourself, and watch how much more successful you will be, having used this key to success.

KEY FIFTEEN

MAKE GOD YOUR SOURCE

My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:19

This key could be more important than any other in opening a miracle life to you on this earth. From the first book we read in the Bible to the last—Genesis through Revelation—we are told to look directly and only to God as THE Source of our supply. Only He is the Source of the more abundant life Jesus speaks of in John 10:10.

There are many instruments of healing and the more abundant life God has placed on earth for us, but whatever truly heals and makes our lives more abundant comes directly from God.

However, oftentimes Christians don't know this. Jesus told us in John 8:44 that the devil is a liar and the father of lies. In this satan-dominated society, the biggest lie he seeks to get us to believe is that man is our source of supply. He seeks to get us to miss the truth of God's Holy Word, that God often uses man as a means or instrument, but God Himself reserves the power to be our Source.

It's not *what* your source is, but *who* your source is.

I've made some of the most serious mistakes when

I've forgotten who my Source was. Too often I looked to some person or secular source and went away disappointed and often defeated.

This key is in your hands every moment of your life. Every time your needs are met through something good, you are dealing with God no matter what instrument He chooses to use.

The only confidence I really have that all of my needs will be met is when I cultivate looking to God as my Source. You see, our faith is to begin and end with Him.

I learned the power of looking to God as my Source early in life. As a young boy we lived near my Uncle Willis Roberts, who had a large orchard made up mainly of delicious Elberta peaches. Often at gathering time my brother Vaden and I would help pick the peaches Uncle Willis would sell to the people who came from miles around to buy them.

After I was grown and entered the ministry, I returned to visit Uncle Willis. To my surprise, I saw that his once-beautiful orchard was in ruins.

I asked him what had happened. He replied, **"I made a fatal mistake. I looked to the fruit and not to the trees, which were the source of the fruit."**

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I didn't take care of my trees, plowing around the base of each one, watering, and spraying them for insects. They kept getting worse until one day the whole orchard was dead," he replied.

"I see you've planted new trees."

"Yes. I called on our county agriculture agent, and he told me to cut down the old trees and plant new ones. He gave me a program to take care of them, and he said the fruit would take care of itself."

With a glow in his eyes, he said, "I'm going to have a new orchard. This time I'll pay attention to the trees, the source of my fruit." He did, and soon his orchard was prospering again.

This was the first time I remembered that this principle was in the Bible—the principle of God being our Source and all other things being instruments only. You see, sometimes we have to cut down the old trees—which represent our old thinking—and plant again, this time looking to God our Source.

Later I wrote a book, *Miracle of Seed-Faith*, which over three million people requested. More than twenty-five years after its publication, I still get hundreds of requests for it each week, including some from government leaders and kings of other nations. No book of the more than a hundred I've written has had a more profound impact on the thinking of those who read and apply it.

A later book I wrote, *Is God Your Source?* may also be of great help to you.

Friend, the day you realize that man is not your source but that God is will be the day you use this key to success with an understanding and dedication that is sure to bring God's supply into every area of your life.

KEY SIXTEEN

NEVER EXPECT A MIRACLE HARVEST WITHOUT PLANTING A SEED OF FAITH FIRST

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

—Luke 6:38

The secret to this key starts with what I believe is God's favorite word—*give*. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He gave us a clear picture of giving and its benefits. In Luke 6:38 Jesus says our giving comes back in seven ways. When you give, here is what He says happens:

1. It shall be given to you;
2. good measure,
3. pressed down,
4. shaken together, and
5. running over,
6. shall men give into your life.
7. For with what measure you give, it shall be given to you again.

Seven is God's perfect number, and the use of it here symbolizes that God's multiplying back to you is measureless. I've found it to be true a thousand times over. But only in giving to God first, in planting a seed of your faith first, can you expect a miracle harvest.

As I grew up on a farm until I was fourteen, I learned early in life the key of giving to God first and then expecting a harvest. Along with my father and my brother Vaden, who was two years older than I, I learned this principle through farming, a principle which is one of the most valuable lessons one can ever learn in life.

No matter how hard we boys worked helping Papa plow up the ground, digging deep rows with the big lister, or how beautiful it all looked to the eye, if we didn't have faith enough to put seed into those rows—faith in the seed's ability to produce after its own kind—we had no hope of receiving a harvest for all of our labor. We had to do as Jesus said—give *first*.

We had a neighbor who would get all excited every spring about plowing up his fields and putting in his crop. But he never finished putting all the seed in, nor was he careful to plant his best seed.

It was no wonder that Papa's crops were always more beautiful than this neighbor's. Papa would say to Vaden and me, "Boys, we've got the fields plowed, listed, and ready for the seed. Now the real work starts. It's time to plant seed."

At first we weren't ready to start planting after doing all that plowing and listing. **But Papa knew that if you**

Never Expect a Miracle Harvest Without Planting a Seed of Faith First

don't put something in, you don't get anything out. "The seed is in the planter," Papa would say. "We'll take turns guiding it down the rows behind the mule until all the seed is planted. Then we'll wait for the harvest."

God drove this principle home to me again many years ago as I was driving up the California highway to a crusade in Washington. I drove by the great Columbia River, which winds its way from Portland to Spokane. And it was harvesttime. In every little town the farmers were there with their produce, buying and selling and going to the bank to pay off debts. They were buying clothes for their children and gifts for their families. There was an air of joy all around. The whole place was alive. People had money because their harvests had come.

The Lord said to me, "Do you realize that somebody first planted a seed for this harvest?"

I've discovered that many people are waiting for their harvest who have planted little or no seed. Their faith, a measure of which God said in Romans 12:3 has been given to each of us, lies dormant in their hearts, unreleased to God. I've also seen how disappointed they are, and even perplexed, when there is no harvest.

The apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:7 that we reap what we sow. This inspired man was applying a natural law spiritually. He knew that it takes faith to sow a seed and also to expect a harvest from that seed sown.

Since I first discovered this divine principle in the Word of God, **I vowed I would never, ever ask anything from God until I planted my seed *first*.** My seed is a gift of my earnings, a gift of my time, a gift of my talent, or a

gift of myself given in faith that God will give back to me the seven ways Jesus promises in Luke 6:38.

I can testify that without adopting Seed-Faith as my way of life, I would never have gotten to first base in the degree of success I've had. I've learned, sometimes the hard way, that I am a foolish man if I expect a miracle without planting a seed of faith to God FIRST.

And I know of no Christian who is living a Seed-Faith lifestyle on a continual and expectant basis who is not having a high degree of success.

**When we give to God first, His
multiplying supply back to us is
measureless!**

KEY SEVENTEEN

GIVE GOD YOUR BEST, AND THEN EXPECT HIS BEST

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

—Malachi 3:10

In II Samuel 24 the prophet Samuel tells of a grievous sin committed by King David.

David had been prospering mightily. He was the first to push back the borders of Israel after Moses had brought the Israelites out of bondage and Joshua had led them into the Promised Land. There were still many enemies, but David had conquered much, pushing the borders back to encompass all the land that God had promised them. And he was a man who was prospering in everything he did.

But one day David forgot that God was his Source. He numbered the soldiers of Israel, which represented his mistake of looking to God's instrument—the mighty battle power of Israel's army—as his source. David forgot that we're not to look at the material things we have as sources. We're to look to God.

So David counted his soldiers, threw out his chest,

and said, "We can defeat anybody!" But God sent the prophet Samuel to rebuke David. When he realized what he had done, David cried out to God, "I have sinned!"

Now it was something for a man as great as the king to acknowledge he had sinned. And because he was living under the Old Covenant, God meted out punishment, commanding David to build an altar unto Him before all the people of Israel.

First God directed him to go to an Israelite named Araunah, who owned a threshingfloor, and build the altar there.

Verses 21 and 22 tell what happened when he arrived:

And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.

After he had sorely failed, David discovered this key to success: Give God your best, and then expect His best. Look at verse 24:

And the king said unto Araunah, Nay, but I

Give God Your Best, and Then Expect His Best

will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

What did David say? I want you to notice his answer: "I will not give God that which costs me nothing." He gave God his best and then expected God's best.

If I've learned anything about success, it is that you can't build success on anything less than your best. And in your giving, always give God your best—not that which costs you nothing.

You know, if you give God nothing and He multiplies it, it is still nothing. Likewise, if you give God nothing to work with and you still expect Him to give you His best, just what chance of success do you have?

The Bible speaks of *giving AND receiving* (Philippians 4:15).

You'll be glad to know that the apostle Paul adds another word about giving. He says, *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver* (II Corinthians 9:7). Paul's word to us is, "Don't give grudgingly."

There are so many lessons I have learned and am still learning about giving God my best. One of them is that your expectation is first of all based on your giving. Giving is the opening up of your better self, the opening of your whole heart and sharing the best you have with

God. David said he would not give God that which cost him nothing because he well knew he could not expect God's best if he didn't first give God his best.

I've often told the story of how as a young pastor with a wife and children I once gave my entire week's salary of only \$55 in an offering.

The little church I was pastoring while I was attending a nearby university had no money to furnish us a place to live. We didn't have the money either. A family in the church kindly invited Evelyn and me and our little children to move in with them in their small two-bedroom house.

After a few weeks, it was just too hard on our wives having their children and ours in one small house. One day Evelyn said, "Oral, this isn't right for these dear people or for us. I'm taking the children and going to my mother's until you get us a place to live."

At first what she said was a terrible blow to me. But it caused me to pray and to start listening in my spirit to what God might be saying to me. I knew He, not the church or even my own salary, was my true Source of supply.

At church the following prayer meeting night, I again explained to the people my dilemma as their pastor of having nowhere to live and the need for us to rally together to buy a parsonage. Suddenly I felt a strong impression to give my entire week's salary—\$55! I laid it on the altar and asked if anyone else felt led to help.

It was as if a dam broke. Different ones began weeping and saying how much they would give. By the

end of the service that night, we had gotten enough for a down payment!

Evelyn wasn't able to attend that prayer meeting, so when I returned home, she asked me how the service went. I told her it was great. "What happened?" she asked. When I told her about how the entire church began giving, she said, "How much did you give?"

"Our whole week's salary," I said.

"Oh, Oral!" she exclaimed. "What will I use to buy groceries for these children this week?" and she burst into tears.

I hugged her to me. I knew I should have consulted her about our giving, but the Spirit of the Lord was all over me to give God my best and then expect His best. Evelyn was really hurt. I felt bad for her, but I could not feel bad for giving God my best.

About four o'clock in the morning there was a loud knock on our door. It was Art Newfield, a prosperous wheat farmer and member of the church. "I apologize for waking you up at this time of night," he said, "but I was at the church tonight and saw you give your best. I gave nothing.

"When I got home, I couldn't sleep. So about an hour ago I got up and went into my yard and dug up this," he said as he handed me four \$100 bills.

Evelyn was peeking around the bedroom door, listening. I went over and just shook those four \$100 bills in her face. I said, "I gave God my best. Now look, God has given us His best, which is seven times more than I gave. We're going to get that parsonage!"

That moment is still alive to me now, and it has continued to be all through the years. From it I learned a great secret.

**GIVING GOD YOUR BEST AND
THEN EXPECTING HIS BEST is
the key to success in meeting every
area of need. It unlocks the door of
God's provision every time!**

KEY EIGHTEEN

LET GO AND LET GOD

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

—Psalm 37:5

Some keys are harder to use than others. Those keys are difficult to fit into the lock to open the door. Having a key is not always enough. At times, when a certain key doesn't work right, I've discovered that the only way to unlock the door to success is to let go and let God.

One of the most memorable experiences I had in learning the difficult lesson of letting go and letting God was in my healing crusade in Formosa, which is now known as Taiwan. At first, everything I did in praying for the sick during those meetings seemed wrong. Never before had healings failed to come, no matter where I was in the United States or overseas. But after three nights of my Formosa crusade, it seemed that no one was getting healed.

Formosa was a military island at the time under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The auditorium was packed. Soldiers lined the walls, and the atmosphere was tense.

Then a good thing happened. One of the missionaries called me aside and confided, "Brother Roberts, the

Chinese people do not like to be physically touched. They feel it violates their dignity, that they lose face if this is done."

"But my healing ministry is centered on the Bible doctrine of the laying on of hands according to Mark 16:18. This is God's way, and I know no other way!" I said.

"I understand," he replied. "But if you'll only take time to explain that to the people, it could make a difference."

So before I started to pray for the line of sick people, I preached to the vast audience, saying, "Friends, when I touch you with my hands and ask Jesus to heal you, it is not with the intention to embarrass or offend you. In fact, it is the highest compliment I can pay you. For when I touch you with my hands in Jesus' Name, I'm touching you with all the care and compassion of my heart. When I lay hands on you, I'm conferring the highest honor on you that I can. Please accept that as the best way I know to see Jesus heal you."

My prayers for the first part of the healing line were still difficult, with seemingly no results. And when sick people are not being healed in a ministry such as mine, believe me, you may as well go home.

About that time a Chinese woman about thirty-five years old came before me. A large goiter bulged from her neck. Suddenly the Spirit of the Lord rose up strong in me, and I sensed that God was going to heal her. I took a moment and explained again to the crowd why I laid hands on people as I prayed. There was deathly quiet

among the thousands jamming the building, especially among the hundreds of armed soldiers standing all along the walls.

The goiter was large, and with the bright lights on the stage, most everyone could see it. **I touched it, calling in Jesus' Name for God to heal her. As soon as I did, the goiter actually (vanished! I mean, it was gone! Her neck was smooth.**

Suddenly I heard a commotion. The soldiers were rushing the stage. Talk about being scared—I was feeling it! Several rushed onstage, grabbed the woman's neck, and in Chinese demanded to know where the goiter went. My interpreter explained to me that the woman answered, "Jesus Christ healed me! He made the goiter leave! He did it!"

To my surprise, the soldiers knelt and told my interpreter to ask me to pray for them. When I did, many of them were saved. After that, everybody wanted hands laid on them!

The next day I was summoned before General and Mrs. Chiang Kai-shek. There I gave my witness of Jesus Christ. Next, the general had me speak to the officers of the army—several hundred of them—which I did, leading many of them to Jesus.

Afterward, I reflected on a scene that had begun to turn ugly and dangerous before a miracle settled the issue. Then it came to me what the key to success was in that situation: TO LET GO AND LET GOD!

Had I persisted in going the way I was, without listening to God speaking through one of the missionaries,

and had I not taken time to explain that the laying on of hands was one of God's ways of healing and was not meant to offend any race of people, I don't know what would have happened.

No doubt the Lord would not have been able to bless the people as He wanted to had I not been sensitive to change and taken a different route, clearing up the misunderstanding. When I did that, I was letting go of my way of doing things and letting God be in control of the situation. Tremendous miracles were the result!

You may ask, "How do I let go and let God?" I personally believe you do it by having a sensitive spirit both to people you're dealing with and to the God who is the Source of all success.

To try to have one's own way—whether it's right or wrong—without going the second mile in trying to help people understand your motive and method is plainly foolish and sometimes disastrous. But when you let go of your way and let God take control, in your heart you let Him know you're open at all times for Him to deal with you directly or through one of His messengers, and you become willing to listen and submit to His better way.

**Sometimes letting go and letting God
may be difficult, BUT IT CAN BE
DONE!**

KEY NINETEEN

NEVER STRIKE BACK

Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

—Romans 12:19

No man was ever as wrongly treated, even to the point of an unjust death by crucifixion, as Jesus of Nazareth. And no man has ever had such power to strike back. Matthew 26:53 tells us that Jesus said to the soldiers who came to arrest Him, *Thinketh thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels'?*

Jesus could have called 72,000 angels to His side to wipe out those soldiers, but remembering that vengeance is God's, He didn't do it. Instead. He took control of Himself by leaving it to God and refusing to strike back.

How many times have I, as a healing evangelist, a television personality, and a builder of a new kind of university based on the concept of the whole person, found myself swimming against the tide of human opinion and being hit from all sides, both from the secular world and often even church leaders.

Each time I was attacked, everything in my natural power cried out to react, to let them have it, lay it on them, and defend myself with a vengeance. And I confess that there have been times I didn't handle opposition and

persecution well.

At first, when God began to heal the growing crowds through me, I thought that because I felt such a strong anointing in my preaching and in the healing lines, everybody—especially organized churches and their preachers—would be thrilled.

I was shocked, and justly so, to find that I was wrong in my judgment, and at times I let it get to me. Two things saved me.

First, when my mother told me the story of how she vowed to give me to God to preach the Gospel someday, God put it on her heart to confide, "Son, don't ever strike back. Leave revenge in the hands of the Lord."

Second, Papa talked to me too. He said, "Oral, only God can absorb the terrible power of taking vengeance."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Vengeance will do more harm and damage to the one giving it than the one it is given to. Not you nor anyone else can absorb the kind of punishment that is the result of seeking revenge. Like your mother told you, leave it to God, and don't strike back."

I soon discovered that as long as I had integrity of life and purpose, God was with me in the opposition, the often cruel and dangerous treatment against what I was trying to do. I saw that as I obeyed God, nothing people did could stop Him from working His miracle power through me as long as I didn't strike back. But I knew within myself that if I retaliated. I would get my mind off what God called me to do. and I would lose the most precious thing in my life—my obedience to God.

The persecution caused me to lean on God more, to develop and grow stronger. I can honestly say that without the constant opposition and my refusal to strike back, the devil could have stopped me the first year or two of my ministry. I have come to thank God, in spite of not always liking it, that He allowed me to be so severely opposed. As Paul said, *When I am weak, then am I strong* (II Corinthians 12:10).

I also saw in studying Jesus' life that a ministry based on His life and ministry would bring the same type of opposition that came at Him. I remembered how God told me at the beginning of my ministry, "Son, be like Jesus, and heal the people as He did." Whatever ways I am like Jesus I trace back to my determination never to strike back.

It is fair to say that I became known as a man of God with a large ministry who, when struck, didn't strike back. I personally believe it kept me from getting bitter, holding grudges, losing my joy, or giving up.

As I look back over the long trail of my ministry, I realize that I can't count the number of false accusations and misrepresentations that have come against me and my ministry, including public humiliation and even physical abuse. I am absolutely delighted in my soul that I've refused to strike back. I thank God for parents who taught me this key to success, and I thank Him also that *he giveth more grace* (James 4:6).

No doubt in your life's journey you have been tempted, as I have, to strike back, to wonder why you're sometimes misunderstood and treated unjustly and even

harshly. With all the force of my personal experience of being on the winning side, I can honestly tell you that it pays to control your own spirit, put a bridle on your mouth, call on God to help keep you from striking back, and stay sweet in your own soul.

**It pays to trust the God who said,
*Vengeance is mine; I will repay.***

KEY TWENTY

YOU CAN TAKE A LITTLE MORE

For which cause we faint not.... For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

—II Corinthians 4:16,17

One of the best friends I ever had, Steve Pringle—who helped me launch my healing ministry in 1947—was very attuned to my moods when misunderstandings of my motives and persecutions of my ministry hit.

Early in my ministry, not yet having done much for God, I was not used to being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. It was a shattering experience, and sometimes I literally wanted to quit. On one such occasion I was sharing my heart with Steve. He patiently listened and then reached out and touched my arm. "Oral, my friend," he said, "remember one thing from Jesus: You can take a little more."

Like liquid fire, his words went through my whole being. The timing was just right. "Thanks, Steve," I said. "You may have just saved my life and whatever success God has planned ahead for me."

If I were to point to one thing I would always want to remember when the going is rough and the opposition is fierce, it's this: I can take a little more. I can keep going,

despite the opposition. **Knowing that I can take a little more, no matter what I face, became a key in my spirit that opened doors which had been closed to me.** And if I added up the number of times I've used that key to success, I doubt if I could count them all.

We're told of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane that *he went a little farther* (Matthew 26:39). It was an awful night, perhaps the worst night of all nights in His whole existence. The traitor, Judas, was on the way with a mob to arrest Jesus on false charges. The Bible tells us that His disciples could not even watch with Him for one hour (see v. 40). Jesus was all alone.

To be successful, you sometimes have to fight loneliness. But the key to success, no matter what obstacle you face, is to remember that God has made you capable of taking a little more. And the Bible says Jesus *for the joy that was set before him endured the cross*, knowing he could take a little more (Hebrews 12:2).

I remember when we were trying to purchase the grounds on which Oral Roberts University is located. The owner, a wealthy oil man whose family had lived there thirty-five years, kept saying no. No matter how many times I sent our attorney, Saul Yager, to his attorney to see if he would sell, the answer was no. Saul finally said, "Oral, you may as well give up on this. He won't sell. Besides, he is wealthy and doesn't have to."

After about twenty tries and being turned down that many times, one day I was praying about the piece of land which God had put on my heart ten years before as the place to build Him a university. "Go one more time," He

whispered in my heart.

Immediately I phoned my attorney and said, "Go one more time."

"All right, if you say so," he replied. "But he won't sell."

"Please," I said, "go one more time."

Within hours, his phone call came back. "Are you ready for this?" Mr. Yager said. "The man said he decided yesterday to sell if we came back again."

That's how we got the beautiful land on which ORU stands today.

If there's one powerful key to success I could share with you, it's this:

**You can take a little more.
Go one more time.
Keep holding on for your miracle!**

KEY TWENTY-ONE

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

—Galatians 6:9

My mother was praying for the sick before I was born. My family were country people, farmers, and lived quite far away from their neighbors. Doctors at that time were few, and when townspeople became seriously ill, they would send a messenger by horse or on foot to say, "Sister Roberts, come quickly and pray for God to heal."

Mama had five children, and with helping Papa farm and carrying on her household duties, she finally grew weary in body and spirit as those trips to sick neighbors multiplied due to her success through prayer.

When I was old enough to understand, I would hear her sigh as another messenger rode up, asking her to come and pray. But it didn't matter if she had to walk two or three miles one way to get there; she loved it and felt called of God to do it. However, there's just so much a body can take.

Papa would say, "Claud, you can't keep on making all these sick calls. It's just too much."

She would agree at the moment, but something from on high was in her spirit. **As long as people called and**

she believed there was a chance prayer could change things, she just kept on keeping on.

That affected me positively in two ways. First, when I became deathly ill with tuberculosis at seventeen, my mother never quit praying for me to be healed, encouraging me to pray—although I would protest that I didn't know how—and absolutely, totally refusing to give up and let that dread disease take my life. She was as solid as a rock in her belief that God would heal me. I can tell you, a mother who never gives up is a force satan has to reckon with!

Second, after my healing, I was called to preach and take God's healing power to my generation. When opposition would suddenly come at me like a flood at high tide, at those times Mama would come to me and say, "Son, you can't ever stop. Man didn't heal you, save you, or call you: God did! He didn't give up, but He sent His only Son to the Cross and then raised Him from the dead, where He is now seated at the Father's right hand interceding for you. Just keep on keeping on, and God will see you through!"

In the midst of trying to acquaint the world and reacquaint the church with the truth that God is a good God, a healing God, a God of love and compassion—and when that single truth was so easily misunderstood and brought such terrible persecution—Mama's words were water in the desert for me. They were life to my own spirit of determination. **I was dedicated to God's call, and her words helped steady me to keep on keeping on.**

In one of his most famous commencement addresses,

Keep On Keeping On

Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II, said seven memorable words. As graduates of the university sat in their academic robes, breathlessly waiting to hear one of the stirring speeches for which Mr. Churchill was famous, he paused while addressing his audience, looked out over those young men and women, and said in that inimitable voice: "Never give in—never, never, never, never"

After he finished his address and sat down, the effect was electric. And after more than sixty years the world can still hear Winston Churchill's words: "Never give in—never, never, never, never!"

Perhaps you have thought the call on your life is too much, the failure of friends and foes to understand it too unfair. Weariness over burdens makes it seem too hard to go on.

Know this in your soul: To keep on keeping on is a key that unlocks the door to success that no one—not the devil and not any human source—can ever, ever take away from you!

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CANADA

I care about you!

I want to invite you to write me. When you tell me what you're going through, I can know better how to write you back . . . and how to pray and help you believe God for A FLOW OF ABUNDANT MIRACLES to flood your life. *Simply fill out the Prayer Sheet* or address your personal letter to:

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And when you write, I encourage you to consider planting a seed of your faith to God through this ministry. It's one of the best ways I know to help you release your faith to God and to look to Him alone to supply all your need according to Philippians 4:19.

❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖

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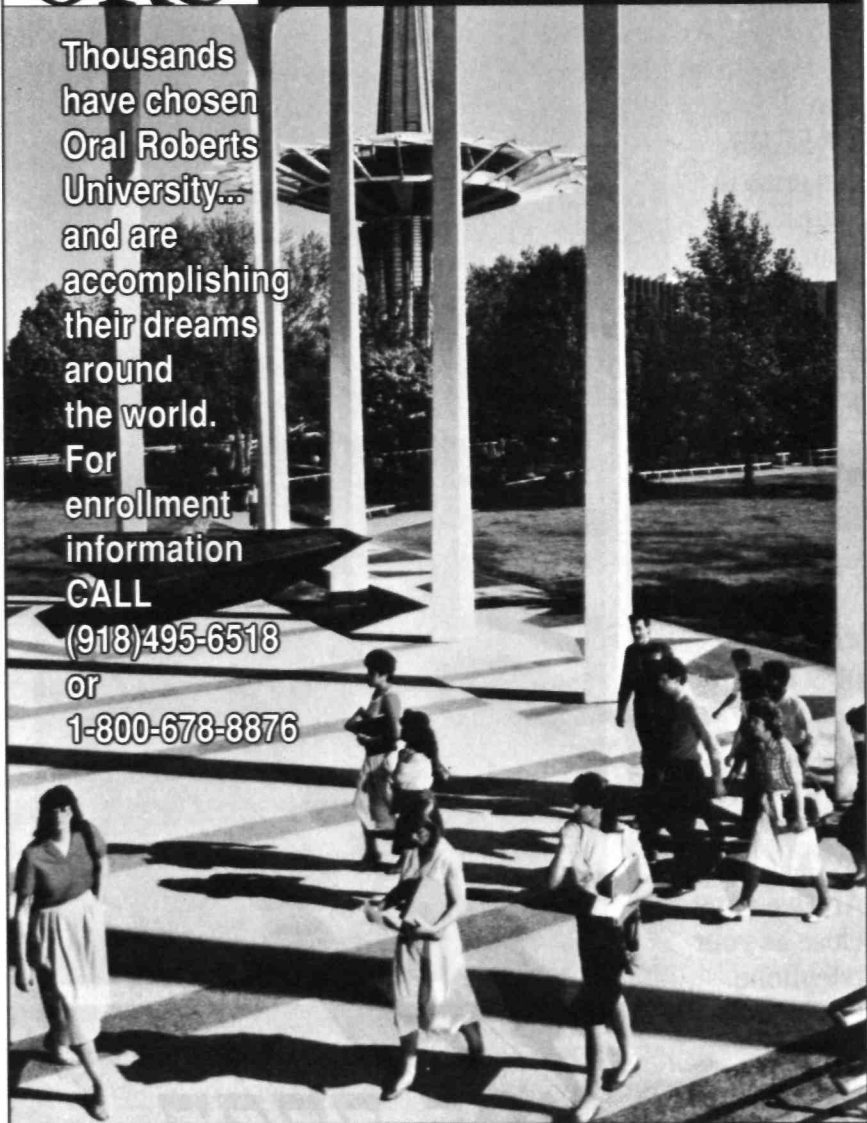
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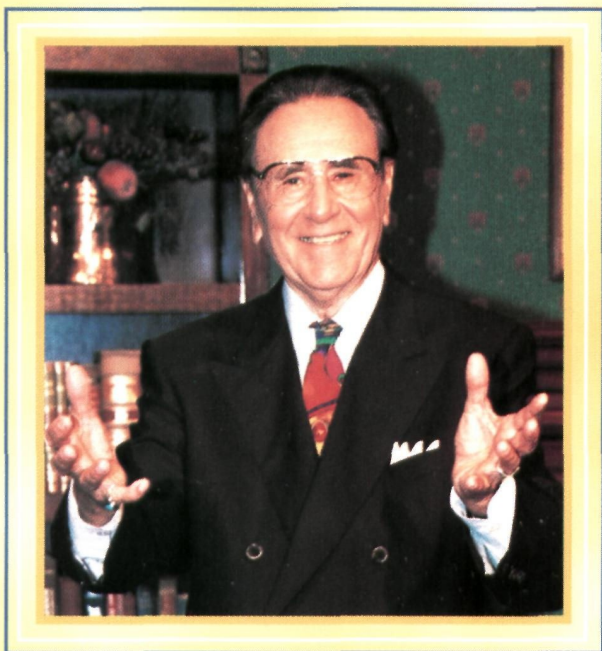
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Known around the world as one of the outstanding men of this generation, Oral Roberts has been in the healing and deliverance ministry for more than fifty years. Since 1947 he has conducted over three hundred healing crusades on six continents, spoken to thousands of church groups and civic organizations, written more than a hundred books, and personally laid hands on more than a million and a half sick people.

Founder and chancellor of Oral Roberts University, Oral continues to be recognized by many titles--evangelist, educator, businessman, author, and television personality--which have gained him worldwide acclaim.

Currently at work on a mandate from God to build a new television network, the Golden Eagle Broadcasting Network, Oral remains committed to full-time ministry, traveling border to border and coast to coast, and is still preaching the Gospel and bringing God's healing power to his generation.